

NEW YORK AWAITS GRAHAM CRUSADE

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NEW YORK AWAITS GRAHAM CRUSADE

Preacher Heard by Multitudes of World
Prepares to Face His Greatest Challenge

[Billy Graham faces his biggest preaching challenge this week when he moves into New York City with its mixtures, its blasé veneer, its individual isolation and its showy distractions. But he is confident the "power of the Holy Spirit" will prevail.]

BY GEORGE W. CORNELL

NEW YORK, May 11 (AP)—A tall, amiable man from the hill country strides into the midst of the world's greatest city this week to sound a power-packed call to God.

Billy Graham, a roving preacher who has stirred the multitudes with his message in hamlets and cities around the globe, is opening his drive to rouse the giant of them all.

"New York," he said, "is our Jerusalem."

In Semiseclusion

For three months now, Graham has been in semiseclusion at his mountain-side home near Montreat, N.C., plowing his garden, shearing sheep, planting grass — and studying and praying for his keenest test.

"It is the greatest oppor-

tunity and responsibility I've ever had," he said in a telephone interview.

All through the period of Graham's personal preparation, and for two years before, a powerful array of religious forces has been gathering here and elsewhere to lend backing to the crusade.

It begins next Wednesday night in the 20,000-seat arena of Madison Square Garden, and will continue nightly for at least six weeks, and perhaps for months beyond that.

In confronting New York City, this busiest crossroads of mixed races, beliefs and influences, Graham said he does so with trepidations at

his own "inadequacies and lack of ability" but with "complete dependence on God."

"It is our hope," he said, "that the crusade will revive the churches with new energies, that it will bring the secret disciples out of their hiding places, making them like a mighty army, thinking and discussing religion."

In brief, he said, he hopes, to make the metropolitan millions "God-conscious."

If widespread organization, advance activity, prayer and Graham's past performances are any index, the campaign seems destined to command a lot of attention and involve a lot of people.

Impact on Nation

But what the solid results will be, Graham said, "we will have to wait and see."

"If there is a spiritual awakening in New York it will make an impact on the entire nation," he said. "But any awakening in this mighty city will be of necessity by and of the Holy Spirit of God."

An imposing amount of human effort is going into the undertaking.

More than 1500 of New York City's Protestant churches have pitched in to supply 4000 singers (1500 nightly), 2500 ushers (500 a night), and 4000 counselors.



CRUSADE HELPERS—Campaign workers, surrounded by stacks of mailing material, prepare for Billy Graham's evangelistic invasion of New York at headquarters in midtown Manhattan. Crusade will open Wednesday in Madison Square Garden.

(AP Newsfeatures photo)

trained over a nine-week period. New York is probably "the most groups" (1500 of them in 47

prayed-for spot on the face of the earth."

And at this moment, as of the earth."

Graham has urged, New More than 8000 "prayer people, have sent word they

are meeting regularly to pray for the success of the crusade.

"It is going to have the eyes of the Christian world," Graham said. "It is going to be evaluated and discussed by churches more than any evangelistic effort in modern times."

Religiously, New York presents a special challenge to the Protestant evangelist.

The city is only 25% Protestant. It's about 45% Roman Catholic, 25% Jewish and 5% Eastern Orthodox. Of this total in religious background, only about 42% are active in any church.

Criticism, Praise

Several Catholic spokesmen, in mingled criticism and praise of Graham, have emphasized that their church disapproves members attending such Protestant-type services, but concede many of them probably will attend anyhow.

Jewish leaders have expressed no objection to members attending the services, although Rabbi William F. Rosenblum of Temple Israel says he doubts any "appreciable number" of Jews will

be swayed to Christian doctrine. Graham himself, who has often faced hostile reactions in opening campaigns only to end up by winning eulogies from his critics, said he knows New York City is not "going to be easy."

"But I believe a great spiritual battle is going to be fought in New York City," he said. "Christianity is always a conflict and a warfare. The attack may come from the most unexpected source."

Cost \$900,000

The campaign, for six weeks, will cost \$900,000, with about a third already raised, mostly from New York donors, and at special collections in campaigns at other cities—Louisville, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, Buffalo and Richmond.

All receipts are handled by local sponsors—in this case, a New York interdenominational committee headed by George Champion, president of Chase Manhattan Bank.

Graham gets no special pay. He's on a fixed \$15,000 annual salary from his evangelistic association headquarters in Minneapolis.